

# HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's **OTHER** Newspaper

## CRISIS HITS RAG TRADE

One of Hackney's most vital industries is in a severe crisis, brought on by the worsening economic situation caused by Tory Government policies. And the people who are suffering most are the workers, with jobs getting scarcer and, as the table shows, real wages dropping.

INSIDE, Hackney People's Press looks at the rag trade in Hackney; why it was booming a year ago, why it is in a slump now. We examine the solutions called for by the unions, and some other plans for the industry that have been proposed.

### Wage levels crash

Jan 79 Now

#### WEEKLY WAGES

Qualified Presser	£115	£90
Finisher	£45	£40

#### WAGE/GARMENT

Jackets	160p	100p
Dresses	70p	60p



Photo: Hackney Flashers

## Mitchell goes public as resign calls grow

Hackney's Police Commander David Mitchell was singled out for peak-time television viewing on 25 June, and added further ammunition to the demands that have come from some community groups for his removal or transfer to a less sensitive area.

The 1½ hour film, made for Yorkshire TV by Jonathan Dimbleby, contained interviews with Cdr Mitchell, Hackney Council for Racial Equality chairperson Dudley Dryden and Council leader Martin Ottolangui. It also showed policemen from Stoke Newington police station in action.

Cdr Mitchell's views were as forthright as usual. He felt he "should not be too concerned with what minority groups think." He saw nothing wrong with harassing groups of young black people simply because they were standing around on a corner, because he felt that they should not be there. And he would not hesitate to bring in the SPG again, if he felt they were necessary. This despite the call from Hackney Council for the disbandment

of the SPG after their involvement in the death of Hackney resident Blair Peach.

Meanwhile the row about the HCRE's call for Cdr Mitchell's removal simmers on, at least in the letters page of the Hackney Gazette. This followed a quite disgraceful report of the HCRE AGM which called, by a four to one majority, for Mitchell to go. This was turned by the Gazette into a "Major Split" with a lead story on the front page, in an article which so misrepresented the views of the HCRE that they are considering referring the story to the Press Council.

**NF**

HCRE secretary Ian Haig was asked by the meeting to write to Cdr Mitchell about his remarks, uttered in public, in the presence of several journalists and a Hackney Councillor, that the National Front was "the only party that stood up for Britain." Cdr Mitchell has



Commander Mitchell

since denied that he said this, in a reply to Ian Haig, but all the witnesses present agree that what was reported was true.

It is obvious that there is growing mistrust of the police in the black community in Hackney. And with remarks from one officer, as shown on the TV programme, who said that the trouble was "we can't tell one black face from another", it is hardly surprising.

## Golden handshake for Smalley architect

Terry Roberts, the Hackney Council Borough Architect and the man who designed the controversial Smalley estate, is to retire early with a golden handshake thought to be in the region of £30,000.

Roberts was specifically brought to Hackney to bring in the "Co-ordinated Housing" of which Smalley was the prototype. Since this estate was completed there have been perpetual complaints that the houses are badly designed and cause acute problems of damp and condensation. These complaints have been echoed by tenants from other estates completed after Smalley, who have found that their houses suffer from the same problems.

The move to oust Roberts has always been likely since the reorganisation of the Architects Department under the new Directorate of Planning and Development. Roberts applied for the new job, but it was given to an outsider. Other Heads of Department have been kept on, but it has been "mutually agreed" that he should go after co-operating in all discussions

in order to "facilitate the smooth and efficient transition...to the revised structure."

The Council minutes go on to say that acceptable terms have been settled, and the Council's discretion to award 10 years superannuation has been used. Informed guesses suggest that this means that he will be getting a sum in the region of £30,000.

It is known that there has been a lot of bad feeling in the Architects Department. This came to the fore over Smalley and also the refusal to allow one member, Barry Fineberg, work on his proposal for a Lea Valley relief road. The Smalley affair resulted in statements being issued through the union, NALGO, that work on repairing Smalley should be handled by the Department.

Now there is considerable relief and the general hope is that the Department can get on with their jobs - particularly with solving the problem of the repairs for Smalley and the other estates affected by damp. It could be a long job.



# Central Line breakdown

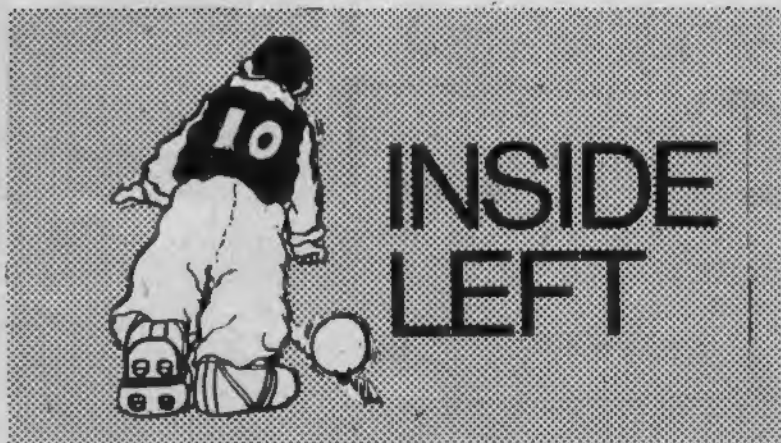
If there was such a thing as a political map of Hackney it would display an interesting range of colours. The northern third of the borough is, of course, firmly under the control of the future People's Republic of Hackney North and Stoke Newington, under the leadership of Comrade General Ernie Roberts, and so is coloured a good socialist red. The southern third is a mish-mash of small pockets of loony fascists, who presumably want to keep their area pure white, some fairly substantial areas of the same hue as the northern comrades, a grey area around Albion Square, where the Hackney equivalent of the Liberal revival dreams the impossible dream, and the remainder a rather turgid pale pink, controlled by died-in-the-wool born-and-bred Labour Party stalwarts.

The remaining third of the map is Hackney Central. Now you might expect that this kind of area, containing as it does such noble citadels of Labour solidity as the Town Hall and the Trades and Labour Club, would be a vital, progressive and campaigning force in the democratic socialist movement in the borough. You would be wrong. The area is governed by the most rotten of the three Constituency Labour Parties, and is the base on which the right-wing Old Guard on the Council keep their support. Eighteen councillors represent the seven wards in Hackney Central. Of these no less than 12 hold the chairs or vice-chairs of the various committees. This compares with eight held by Hackney South and a paltry five held by Hackney North.

## CYNICAL

What disheartens people who would be active in the Labour Party in Hackney Central is the cynical way in which the officers of the local party refuse to let their grip on it be extended. My moles tell me that it has taken some people 15 months to get their membership accepted. The treasurer of one ward branch refused to go out and collect members' subscriptions because she thinks that people should not be "spoon-fed". There are less than 600 people in the party, and less than 100 are active members. At the selection meeting last year for a new councillor for the by-election in Wick Ward, only seven people turned up.

This cynicism extends beyond this refusal to let the party expand in any way. At the June General Management Committee meeting, there was an enormous row about a possible Council by-election in Redory Ward. Susan Gorman has wanted to resign for over a year, but the GMC refuses to let her. John Kotz, Deputy Leader of the Council, said that it is quite all right for her only to attend



Council meetings once every six months which is the minimum to avoid being officially reported for non-attendance.

The views of the other councillors in Rectory that they were overworked and that she should stand down did not seem to matter. The GMC is scared that the local branch would select some Lefty, which might be another crucial vote against them in certain crunch decisions.

## RULES BROKEN

The GMC also manages to break most of the Labour Party's own internal rules about the conduct of the party in local government. These state that it is undesirable for Council group officers to hold office in the party organisation as well. Yet, in Hackney Central, the chairman is Martin Ottolanguì, Leader of the Council, the election agent is Deputy Leader John Kotz and the secretary, treasurer, vice-chair and membership secretaries are respectively Councillors Eddie Millen, Bob Owen, George Silver and Matilda Owen. The leader, Martin Ottolanguì, is a delegate to the GMC from a ward in which he does not live. One other councillor who is on the GMC is Arthur Taylor, and he does not even live in the constituency, but in Hackney North!

The Commission of Enquiry into the Labour Party's internal affairs received much publicity in the press and on television recently. Most of this focused on the new methods of choosing a leader, and of the so-called splits inside the party. Perhaps they might have done better by considering what internal democracy in a mass party like Labour should mean. An active membership of local people convinced of the need for social change. Councillors who represent their constituents, rather than act as local managers for the strong state. Hackney Central, indeed the same is true of all three Hackney constituencies, is the sort of place that are referred to on General Election nights as "Labour strongholds". Strong indeed is the grasp of an old and moribund party like Hackney Central on the area. But the local people don't care because they're hardly aware of the party's existence outside election times.

"Something better change", as the song goes, and change it will. The boundaries will be altered by the time the next election comes around. Hackney Central will simply disappear, cut in two and divided equally between its sisters and brothers, north and south. Will anyone notice? Will anyone care?

## Glad to be gay

Gay Pride Week is now an annual event - a week long celebration when gay people can come forward and declare themselves glad to be gay. In Hackney the main contribution to the Week was from the Rio Cinema, which organised a series of events, both films and live gigs. Many of these were benefits for various gay advice services: Gay Switchboard, Lesbian Line and so on.

Although there were one or two disappointments in this programme, with films or bands not turning up, all in all, there was an encouraging response.

Gay Pride Week ended with a march from Victoria to Malet Street in Bloomsbury. Marchers said that this was

much more heavily policed than is usual with Gay Pride marches, and there was a lot of anger because a man was arrested for being in possession of an offensive weapon - a toy hatchet which he was wearing in his fancy-dress hat! When the march reached its final destination it was decided to go back to Bow Street Police Station and wait until the man - and three others who had also been taken away when they protested at his arrest - was released. Despite further stormy scenes, and another two arrests on the way back to Bow Street, the men were eventually released and the marchers dispersed without further incident.

## SHARPLY CRITICAL

Dear HPP

Recently "Link-Line" published an account by Hackney Council for Racial Equality of their activities. This account was another illustration that there is no way that people can rely on these "official anti-fascists" to fight against racist attacks.

The HCRE say, for example, that they must "maintain their sharply critical position" on the police "until police attitudes change". Now what sort of nonsense is this? What serious person can contend that the police will change, become anti-racist? Haven't we seen a steady increase in the cases of harassment and beatings by the police - both nationally and locally? Haven't our own newspapers been full of reports on the growing number of deaths in police custody?

All the evidence points to the fact that there is no possibility of the police being "reformed" so as to act in a less fascist manner. On the contrary, the working people who face these attacks from Nazis and police must organise themselves self-reliantly to defend their communities from such attacks.

Next the HCRE's attitude to the appointment of Mitchell, as Police Commander. They write: "HCRE is very critical of the new Police Commander and has called for his removal to a less sensitive post."

Now let us look at this - the police authorities appoint an alleged NF sympathiser as Police Commander. Yet HCRE call on these same authorities to remove him! It's the old theory that the problem in the police force is just a couple of "bad apples". Does HCRE seriously contend that a police authority that



appoints a man who has said that the NF "is the only Party that speaks for Britain" will replace him with an anti-racist? The theory is absurd. The presence and rank of officers like Mitchell in the police force is not something which can be reformed away. Rather, it shows the increasingly racist character of the police force as a whole.

It becomes clear that HCRE are more worried about mass resistance to police racism than they are by police racism itself.

Self defence, self-reliant struggle, is the only basis for fighting the racist attacks. Obviously, there are in the community all sorts of different ideas about the police, but it is criminal for organisations like HCRE to distort the lessons of the murders of Blair Peach or Michael Ferriera by claiming that the police can "change" or that the situation will be improved by appealing to the State for reforms.

People's daily experience is showing that you cannot appeal to the government, the police or any other State body such as HCRE to solve the problem of racist attacks.

Yours  
Pete Devenport  
Revolutionary Communist  
Party of Britain  
(Marxist-Leninist)  
(This letter has been cut for space reasons)

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## PIP CRITICISED

Hackney People in Partnership (PIP) is the umbrella group representing community groups involved in negotiations about partnership funding - money which comes from the Department of the Environment for rejuvenating inner-city areas. There has been recent disagreement about what role it should play, which came to a head at its AGM. HPP asked someone closely involved with PIP over the last two years to write the following article.

Hackney is not an area in which there is a dearth of organisations with a vision of a better life. Energy and ideas of great diversity abound.

It is because of this very energy that so many groups sought to bring into reality the idea of community participation in planning and decision-making that the Labour government White Paper on Partnership offered.

People in Partnership was formed to make sure this participation happened in Hackney. Paid workers are needed to sift through the mass of information churned out by public authorities so that member organisations can identify the points where participation in decision-making should take place. They are also needed to service and facilitate the organisational structures, and to ensure that public authorities carry out their undertakings to the voluntary sector. They are not needed to represent the voluntary sector.

It is important that the present debates in People



in Partnership are not swept away merely because each one of them does not stand an analysis which avoids personalities and hypersensitivity. Corridors of power are dirty places and innovations taken by PIP without the full consensus of its member organisations have corrupted it. The substance of the complaints within PIP is about the conflict which has developed in an organisation whose officers speak for it, innovate for it and attempt to fill what they perceive as its inadequacies. Some groups feel that their own partial interests have been threatened.

The failure of PIP to perceive the importance of acting only from consensus decision-making means that the criticisms being made by member organisations are not criticisms about the actual policies of PIP (which they share a responsibility for), but are criticisms about the work of paid officers who they feel unable to control and whose motives they suspect.

It is important that the energy and dynamism returns to the participation of the voluntary sector in decision-making in the borough; PIP should return to a commitment to make those opportunities which exist for participation work, and to a determination to increase accountability in the borough. Member organisations must ensure that they receive from their paid workers the kind of service which allows them to do this.

## MORE LESNEY REDUNDANCIES

Lesney's, manufacturers of die-cast toys, and one of the few private employers in Hackney, have cast another blow for the economy. After the last two rationalisation plans, in which nearly 2,000 workers lost their jobs and two factories were closed, the company told everyone that they - and their cars - were on the road to recovery, and hinted that the new makes of toy were in the pipeline.

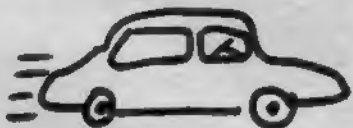
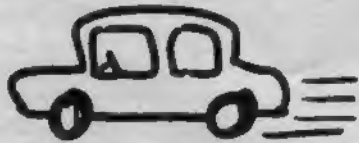
However, their promise of increased production and profitability seemed to have been shortsighted. At the end of last month Lesney UK Operations announced a further 750 redundancies, and production is still down to a third of its output of a year ago.

The company's first major round of redundancies (featured in HPP No 53) were made in February this year, and over 1,000 employees in factories at Eastway and Lea Conservancy were told to leave within two days. The reasons given for this shakedown were high interest rates and inflation, which were hitting UK and foreign markets.

Within three months the company's financial position had deteriorated so much that the bank was called in to advise the directors, and further redundancies were

announced - including the closure of factories at Harlow and Abbey Wood.

While manufacturers up and down the country are being hit hard by inflation and falling demand, some people question the suddenness of Lesney's cutbacks and lack of prior consultation with the unions. Certainly, the way they have implemented redundancies in the past seems heavy-handed and



in the words of one union official, "cavalier".

The staff shakedown has even filtered up to the higher echelons of management in the toy company. Chairman Lesley Smith was recently replaced by Gordon Hay, past chairman of (real life) vehicle makers Duple, and the new finance director is Maurice Alberge, who moved from the drug firm Aspro-Nicholas. Perhaps they hope he will be able to provide a panacea for all their ills?



## CYCLISTS SWOOP

Apart from a couple of badly sited and unused cycle racks Hackney Council provides no facilities for cyclists. Yet in 1980-1 £3.2 million will be spent on improving facilities for other vehicles, like juggernauts.

So on Saturday 14 June several hundred cyclists swooped on Hackney Town Hall to demand that the Council spend at least one per cent of its budget on facilities for cyclists. The demonstration was met by Councillor Richard Gee, who replied to the demands. He blamed the Department of the Environment for the lack of facilities. They had turned down an application for partnership funds to do a feasibility study on improving cycling facilities.

The number of cyclists in Hackney has doubled over the last five years. On 3 July members of the Hackney Cyclists Action Group participated in an all London commuter cyclist count to try and find out precisely how many people use bikes to go to work. HCAG meets once a month in members' homes. If you use a bike and want to campaign for safer roads and better conditions then contact them by ringing Tessa Bain or Martin White on 254 9302.

## BATTERED WOMEN ADVICE LINE OPENS

A quarter of all reported violent crime is made up of assaults upon women by the men that they live with. Often battered women feel isolated, too ashamed to tell anyone about what seems to be happening only to them, and unsure about the options available to them.

Hackney Women's Aid is a group of local women whose aim is to provide refuge and support for women, and their children, who leave home because of violence. They have begun to operate a telephone

advice service for women who are being battered, mentally or physically, by the men that they live with.

The service provides both help in finding a refuge place, if a woman wishes to leave home, and advice on matters such as housing, divorce, injunctions and custody, as well as support for women who would like to talk about their problems and discuss alternatives.

This advice line operates every Thursday from 1 - 5pm on 249 8334.

## DEPUTATION DISAPPOINTED

The question of what to do about the juggernauts that charge through Hackney between the Wick and Highbury Corner was raised again in the open council meeting held on the 25th June. A procession of residents from Graham Road and Balls Pond Road marched down Graham Road from Lebons corner to the Town Hall, where a deputation attended the Council Meeting. The meeting ended with the protesters being disappointed by the response they got from the council. They accused the council of not having done as much as they could have done to stop the lorries, they said "we need more fighting leadership from you to end the lorry menace". Deputation leader John Webster carried on "there is no night time ban on lorries passing through Hackney and there has been no pressure put on the

Police to get speed cuts introduced or limits enforced". At the same time no weigh-bridge has been introduced to check lorry weights and we still have an offal lorry going down Graham Road. If the council really wanted to, it could stop the offal lorry right now". The smell from this lorry has been known to make people physically sick as it goes past. The council has done nothing to enforce the no-left turn from Mare Street into Graham Road. Mr. Webster warned that unless there was really concerted opposition to the G.L.C.'s plan to straighten out the Graham Road/Morning Lane S-bend, thus making the route more attractive to lorries, it would go through and Hackney would be one more step towards being yet another London borough with a motorway through it.

Following the deputation the council passed a motion calling on the G.L.C. to find an alternative heavy lorry traffic route before agreeing to consider any 'improvements' to the Mare Street/Graham Road area. It remains to be seen if, while being a totally commendable motion in itself, how much the spirit of it is carried out.

The Graham Road and Balls Pond Road anti-juggernaut campaign will be at all the summer festivals in Hackney this year, with their petition, t-shirts, badges, bash the teddy, knock-the-nail-in-the-wood and juggernaut-shy sideshows.

## TRAVELLERS NEEDED

Once again, travellers are getting a raw deal in Hackney. After some sort of breakthrough early in June with an article in the Hackney Gazette describing the immunisation programme which some local GPs are trying out on local unofficial caravan sites there was the predictable backlash from the chairman of the Tenants Association on Trowbridge, which borders on to a site quite frequently used in Hackney Wick. This came in a letter which complained about "dogooders" (a doctor doing his job properly is a do-gooder?).

More seriously came a further article in the Gazette which said that Stanley Clinton Davis, the MP for Hackney Central, had been asking the Department of the

Environment to give Hackney an exemption from its legal responsibility to provide a permanent site for travellers. This is something that Hackney should have done by law several years ago and over which the Council has consistently prevaricated. Even the Ombudsman, who is hardly a radical, has decided that Hackney must fulfil its obligations. Hackney Travellers Support Group, a member of local rights workers, ILEA teachers who work with travellers and other concerned people, is seeking a meeting with Stanley Clinton Davis to ask him why he has come out so vehemently against permanent sites in the borough.

To complete a bad month for caravan dwellers, a

group who were camped near the Shoreditch Park were moved on at the specific request of the Shoreditch Festival Committee, who threatened to cancel the festival if the Council did not move them. This is a quite disgraceful action for a group of local people who declare themselves as wanting to promote community relations to take, particularly as the travellers were not even camped on a site that the Festival Committee wanted to use. With some degree of contrition, the Committee has agreed to let the Travellers Support Group have a stall at the Festival.



# BETTER A LIVE I.L.E.A.

The future of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) has become a political issue. Most Conservative councillors and MPs want education to be run by the boroughs. Labour councillors and MPs, and some Conservatives, want Inner London education to remain a unified service.

The government has set up a special committee of ministers to consider the break-up of proposals, and this committee will give its verdict by the end of the summer.

For Hackney parents, rate-payers, school workers and students, the question which has to be answered by those who want the ILEA broken up is this: Would a Hackney Education Authority do better?

Would it cost less? A report published by the GLC in 1978 showed that for Hackney to run and finance its own education service would cost almost twice as much, per head of population. Wealthy bor-

oughs like Westminster and the City of London raise more than 20 times Hackney's rate income. Under the ILEA rate precept, this money is shared out to benefit the rest of Inner London. If the present standard of educational provision were to be maintained, Hackney's rates would have to double.

Of course, costs could be cut by spending less of each child's education. Teachers and other workers in schools could be sacked and class size could be increased. At present the ILEA has the smallest classes in the country; a Hackney Education Authority could not possibly afford to keep these standards up.

## savings?

Would the schools' results improve, as the Tories claim? In education you get what you pay for. With less money

invested, results would probably get worse. In any case, there is much uninformed criticism of London schools and their educational standards. The latest figures show that in ILEA primary schools, maths and English standards are now better than the national average. A higher percentage of children pass "A" levels than in other large cities, and the proportion of children staying on after the age of 16 is higher.

## parents

Would parents get more say in education, or a better choice of schools if Hackney ran its own education? When Hackney people vote in the GLC election, they know that every councillor elected will be a member of the ILEA. The members of a Hackney Education Committee would be only one in three or four of the

elected councillors. At school level, the ILEA was one of the first authorities to have elected parent governors of school. Every borough has a committee where parents are consulted. Under ILEA 9 out of 10 parents can send their children to the school of their first or second choice. A small authority, as Hackney would be, could not do better than this - and if the ILEA were split up it would be much more difficult for Hackney parents to send their children to schools in Islington or Tower Hamlets, as many choose to do at the moment.

## Small gain

Some are tempted to believe that a small education authority would be more efficient. Hackney Council has no experience in running an education service, and has said that it does not wish to do so. Education in Inner London has

been run centrally for 100 years, and since its formation ILEA has acquired a national and international reputation as a pace-setter. Because it is large, ILEA can provide, at a low cost per child, schools for the handicapped, a network of teachers' centres and inspectors, evening classes for adults, a careers service, youth clubs and sports and recreation facilities. A small authority could not equal these without a huge rate increase.

Hackney's public services have taken more than their share of cuts in recent years, and the break-up of the ILEA would be one of the biggest cuts of all. Inevitably the amount of money spent on education would fall. The ILEA has many imperfections, but its policies of reducing class size, of providing extra resources for special needs, such as teachers of English as a second language, and education for children of different cultures, are the right policies for Hackney's schools. It is in the interests of all those who work and study in Hackney for education in Inner London to remain a unified service.

# UNITED AGAINST SCHOOLS CUTS

On 8 May 300 parents, teachers, school workers and children marched to Ockway House, the divisional headquarters of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). This was the beginning of a campaign against the education cuts in Hackney and it resulted in the formation of a new body: HACE, Hackney Against Cuts in Education. The guiding light behind the march was William Patten Infants School and it was at this school in Stoke Newington Church Street that the marchers assembled.

There were also strong contingents from Gayhurst Infants and Northwold Infants and representatives from 14 other Hackney schools. After crowding into the Ockway House car park, we tried to send in a delegation to Mr Mason, the local authority chief. He dismissed the delegation (consisting of one dinner lady and four school-children) with the words: "I don't speak to dinner ladies, I only deal with headmasters." This response was reported back to the crowd outside and we were all shocked by his rudeness and arrogance. We decided to form a group which would have representatives from all the schools who supported the march. Several parents, teachers and school workers came forward. We decided to



meet regularly at the Trades Hall, Dalston Lane, at 7.30pm on Mondays. These meetings are still taking place and everyone is invited to come along.

Four meetings and several sessions of leafletting, petitioning and flyposting in the area followed this. A meeting on 11 June led to the picketing of Kingsmead School Governors. Kingsmead Infants School is losing a teacher despite larger classes next year. Two governors joined the picket and the governing body finally passed a resolution opposing the cuts.

At the next public meeting on 16 June at Gayhurst Infants School HACE was born as a real anti-cuts campaign. It was called by Gayhurst PTA. There was a growing feeling that something positive had to be done, and it was decided to become a branch of HACE and to form a committee of parents to organise an occupation.

## OCCUPY!

Nine days after the Gayhurst meeting, a group of parents and teachers met outside the school at 8.30 in the morning. The plan for the occupation had been well prepared. A parents' committee had been meeting regularly and they had won the support of a majority of parents in the school. A programme had been drawn up for the day, with all sorts of activities and entertainments for the kids and parents had been assigned four to a class. At this stage the occupation was planned to be for 24 hours, with the threat that it would be extended indefinitely if the cuts were not withdrawn.

The occupation went off smoothly; over 100 parents took over the school after registration, displacing the teachers and substituting

their own programme. A large sign had been placed on the school walls reading, "This school is occupied" and posters and leaflets were distributed calling for support. Within two hours, Mason, the divisional officer, was at the school, telling the parents he would be shutting off all the power and locking the toilets if they stayed overnight. With this, Mason crawled off, only to return a few hours later with an official from County Hall, the ILEA headquarters.

A meeting with the parents' committee followed, at which the parents were told they had won back the teacher from the infants school who was threatened with compulsory transfer. Delighted at the news, the parents agreed to call off the occupation. That evening, motions of support were passed at a full meeting of Hackney Council (despite Tory Joe's complaints that this would be a "license

for civil disobedience") and at the Hackney Teachers' Association meeting. Unfortunately a planned march from the HTA to Gayhurst had to be called off as the occupation was over by then.

What are the lessons of Gayhurst? The first thing it proves is that the cuts can be fought successfully, providing a large number of people are prepared to take direct action to stop them. Secondly, it shows the importance of an on-going organisation which can link up



and rate rises. Such is the "fairness" and logic of the capitalist system.

It has been difficult to find out the details of education cuts in Hackney, as we are hampered by the entrenched union bureaucracies, who see redundancies and transfers as "casework" problems, and by the ILEA, who are so obsessed with secrecy that they won't even tell schools why they are getting less money than last year, beyond saying that they aren't deprived enough! However, thanks to the efforts of the HTA cuts subcommittee and HACE, the following facts have emerged:

1. Over 20 primary schools are losing teachers, including several where the roll is rising next year, so they will have more children to teach, and less teachers to do the job. A teacher lost

in a primary school is much worse than one lost in a secondary school, as the staffs of primary schools are smaller: one less out of 10 is a much bigger cut than one less out of 60.

2. Over 30 teachers jobs are being cut in secondary schools. Very little can be done about this, as Hackney's secondary schools have just lost a campaign over amalgamations, which will result in the running down and eventual closure of five of the borough's eleven county secondary schools. As the job losses are being justified by "falling rolls" and implemented by "natural wastage", it is difficult to develop or win a campaign over these jobs. Next year's cuts may be a different matter, as the signs are they will be even more severe. The need for an organisation like HACE will then be greater than ever.



# TORN TO SHREDS

The Government's economic policies are rapidly destroying Hackney's private industry — and the worst victims are the garment factories which until recently have been an integral part of East London life. In the space of a few months, thousands of clothing workers have been made redundant — yet the numbers are so large that no-one knows the real extent of these closures. Below, HPP looks at the reasons for this decline, and what local solutions are being called for.

Some weeks ago ITV's 'Thames Report' carried a documentary on the decline of East London's clothing industry. The programme outlined the problems that have beset garment factories, which are a large source of local employment.

This year alone over 500 such factories have closed, as the doubling of VAT has priced clothes beyond the reach of many people's pockets and high interest rates have made it virtually impossible for small manufacturers to borrow money for the next season's stock.

The programme concluded that the situation would not improve until the economy improved: small consolation for the hundreds of manufacturers faced with liquidation and the thousands of workers faced with the loss of their jobs. Small consolation too, for the boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets, which already suffer from massive unemployment and are in desperate need of commercial rate revenues.

The Tory Government, which is responsible for aggravating the present economic decline through its monetarist policies, has refused to offer help to what it calls 'ailing' businesses. Yet the long-term effect of such policies could mean the destruction of the clothing industry in this country and the loss of several thousand jobs.

## 1. THE CRISIS

Twelve months ago the industry was going through a boom period. Today that boom period has crashed. Geoffrey Howe's Budget doubled VAT from 8% to 15% with the result that clothes and other 'luxury' goods shot up in price beyond what many people could afford. An ominous warning of this drastic fall in demand manifested itself in Oxford Street and other large shopping areas, where the traditional end-of-the-year sales began 2 weeks before Christmas.

Even closer to home, a walk round local shops provides more evidence that the market is collapsing.

As an added problem, the high price of the pound has meant that interest rates have risen sharply over the past 12 months: with disastrous effect for the small manufacturer. High interest rates create a tight stranglehold on the small producer because the high street demand for goods is seasonal. When orders dry up at the end of one season, the manufacturer has to anticipate just what the next season's demand will be. This means having to borrow money to create goods which will not be sold for several months. With interest rates over 20%, many producers are unable to pay back the money they borrowed, and are forced to close down.

On top of this, imported clothes are flooding into the shops to take over the racks and display windows left empty by the local traders. Because

of the binding trade agreements with other countries, retailers are forced to cut back on UK manufacturers' goods first.

An argument against tighter import controls on foreign clothes is that it would have a disastrous effect on the employment of workers in the exporting countries, especially the Third World. However, the solution does not necessarily lie in banning all imports of clothes, but in negotiating a trade price that would actually pay the foreign workers a decent wage.

The nature of the industry, which employs a high proportion of immigrant workers in small family firms, means that very few people are told of their employment rights, and if the firm is in danger of folding the boss will often persuade staff to work on short time (which could mean waiting weeks for work) rather than become redundant.

Homeworking is another aspect of the rag trade which hides the real numbers of people out of work. Many businesses employ a high proportion of mostly



Finishing touches? Garment workers suffer exploitation — and now loss of jobs. (Pic: Hackney Flashers)

At present, the importing of goods from developing countries relies heavily on the financial exploitation of those workers. As an example, shirts imported from Hong Kong have a landing price of £1.70 — far below the production costs of any UK manufacturer. Yet those shirts sell in the shops for between £9 and £10 — an increase of nearly 600%.

As Chris Wilson, local garment union official, pointed out: "We're not afraid of competition and our union has been one of the unions in favour of foreign development. We want to see a favourable return for the developing country's workers' work".

At the moment, the present arrangement isn't helping the consumer, the local manufacturer or the foreign worker. And this, combined with the economic factors, spells disaster for the area's employment.

## 2. HIDDEN NUMBERS

Over the past months literally thousands of garment workers in East London have been made redundant. The unemployment register shows that since January this year over 3,000 people signed on the dole: but this is a gross underestimation of the total jobless figure.

women workers, who operate from home and are paid a token amount for each garment they finish. Again, their isolation from other workers and lack of unionisation makes it impossible to estimate how many have been laid off.

## 3. CAMPAIGN

The National Union of Tailoring and Garment Workers (NUTGW), which represents workers in the tailoring and footwear industries, is fighting a desperate campaign to save jobs.

The union's head of Information and Research, Neil Kearney, told HPP of the demands they are making on the Government to try and halt the present decline. They are asking for:

- i. the reduction of interest rates;
- ii. the abolition (or at least reduction) of VAT on all clothes;
- iii. the tightening up of import controls, especially on low cost textile goods;
- iv. grant aids to ailing firms.

These demands are a final plea before the garment industry is condemned to a speedy and final death. As Neil Kearney explained, the Government would not be losing out by handing out money, because the long-term benefits of keeping factories open and saving jobs would easily offset the initial outlay. However, he was not too optimistic, and complained: "The Government is so short-sighted that one wonders at times whether they can see beyond the end of their noses".

On a local level, the union is calling on Hackney Council to offer financial support to the industry. On July 7th there will be a deputation to the Special Hackney Economic Development Committee (SHED) to call on the Council to undertake a programme of economic aid to local firms. As Chris Wilson, NUTGW Divisional Officer pointed out, Tower Hamlets are opening a showroom to allow small businesses to show their products to potential buyers.

Another source of help may come from Hackney Co-operative Developments, who have employed a group of professional clothing consultants to conduct a feasibility study into the possibility of setting up clothing co-ops. However a spokesperson for Co-op Developments said it could take some time before such co-ops get off the ground.

Any such initiative would require Council backing. However, large public bodies like the Council, the GLC and the Area Health Authority could co-operate by ordering their clothing requirements specifically from local producers.

A local campaign is vital to save jobs and markets, but in no way would they solve the problems. The solution lies squarely at the feet of the Government. If the Tories continue to pursue their disastrous policies, there seems little hope that they will intervene to save the industry. Instead, they would prefer to see massive unemployment, the disappearance of manufacturing skills and the destruction of the local economy. That seems a very high price to pay.

## Wages Snipped

A further aspect of the crisis in the clothing industry, apart from the closures and lay-offs, is the increasing exploitation of the factory workers. The article below outlines how some workers are now being paid less for each garment they produce than they were a year ago.

There has been a deep crisis in the garment industry since December 1979. This crisis affects especially Turkish workers who are mainly employed in small clothing factories.

Over the past few months 12 Turkish run factories have closed down. Eight of these firms employed between 50 to 100 workers; the remaining

of 16% in their pay. However, taking inflation into account, net wages for some workers have decreased by as much as 40%.

A breakdown of the average wages for the different types of garment workers, comparing their present earnings with those of a year ago, is shown below.

TRADE	WAGES AT JAN 79 (£ pw)	WAGES AT PRESENT (£ pw)
PRESSER (Qualified)	£115	£90
PRESSER (Unqual.)	80	70
PRESSER (Inexper'd.)	60	50
FINISHER	45	40
OVERLOCKER	80	65

four employed less than 50 workers.

What is more significant is that the wages in the factories have actually come down. Statistics compiled by the Turkish Workers' Association show that in many factories workers have suffered an average decrease

Although these figures relate to workers in local Turkish factories, they do indicate that in the rag trade as a whole the situation has deteriorated so much that workers are not only being laid off but suffering more and more exploitation.

MACHINISTS (Wages per garment in pence)

	JACKETS	DRESSES	SKIRTS	TROUSERS			COATS (WOMEN)	ANORAKS
				WOMEN	MEN	JEANS		
JAN 79	160	70	30	35	100	100	180	175
NOW	100	60	30	35	100	110	125	100



# SHOCKS

Not even *Evita* opened with as much ballyhoo as there was around the new play at Stratford Theatre Royal, *A Short, Sharp Shock*. Questions asked in Parliament, protests to the Arts Council, irate letters to the Daily Telegraph... either the theatre possesses a publicist of genius (fat transfer fee to the West End now offered), or else the play really is as subversive as Sir Loony Dingbat MP thinks (without having seen it).

Sadly, the latter is not the case. It is imaginatively written, sometimes very funny, well staged and produced, but it lacks that vital oomph which genuinely radical theatre possesses.

## SELF-INTEREST

What we have in *A Short, Sharp Shock* is a potted history of the Conservative Party over the last six years. The play opens on Election Night in February 1974. The Heath government is brought down by the miners, and up on the grouse moors senior Tories bring in elder statesman Lord Home to fix the election for a new leader to get rid of the unpopular Heath. What they need is someone of fibre and they end up with Mrs Thatcher, who is seen at the party conference declaring that they have just ushered in "a new era of self-interest". The Tories get back in.

Meanwhile, the Stocker extended family fight on. Milly is in the Labour Party. Her husband Arthur drifts from the Communist Party to the Ecology Party and back. Jean leaves Pipkin when he says he's become a Tory and goes off to find her grandfather in Newcastle, a man who's in a socialist party of one. The government carries on governing, veering further and further right.

All the leading Tories are played by women, including the "leaderene" herself. Darlene Johnson is a splendidly tortured Keith Joseph, Joanna van Gyseghem an acutely-observed Geoffrey Howe. Gwen Taylor has the much easier job of playing Mrs Thatcher and manages admirably. Robert Walker's direction is as imaginative as one would expect from his successes at the Half Moon. Some of the scenes are spot on - the three Heathmen buttonholing Airey Neave before the leadership election, the converted Pipkin chatting up a deb at the Young Conservatives' Ball ("Are you really working class, Pipkin?") - but the end is muddled and lacks that final big scene. Instead, the curtain comes down on the Stockers as they mill round the stage, searching...for what?

Maybe it's old fashioned of me, but I like my political theatre polemical. And there's not enough of that in *A Short Sharp Shock*.

ADVERTISEMENT



Tel : 254 6677

## July

Sat 5	NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD	
Sun 6	and THE CARS THAT ATE PARIS	11.15
Mon 7	Asian Programme	1.00
For 6 days	BREAKING AWAY and (Sat 5.05)	9.05
Fri 11	NORMA RAE (Sat 3.00)	7.00
Sat 12	SATYRICON and ROMA	11.15
Sun 13	CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON	
Mon 14	and FORBIDDEN PLANET	11.15
For 6 days	Ditto	3.00
Fri 18	MANHATTAN and (Sat 5.30)	9.15
Sat 19	TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (Sat 3.45)	7.20
Sun 20	PERFORMANCE and EASY RIDER	11.15
Mon 21	DR STRANGELOVE and	
For 6 days	KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS	11.15
Fri 25	Ditto	2.15
Sat 26	MY BRILLIANT CAREER (Sat 4.30)	7.30
Sun 27	AMERICAN GRAFITTI and CAR WASH	11.15
Mon 28	THE LAST WALTZ and NETWORK	11.15
For 6 days	THE BILL DOUGLAS TRILOGY	2.30
Fri Aug 1	THE BLACK STALLION 1.50, 4.40, 7.30	
Sat Aug 2	DARK STAR and	
Sun Aug 3	THE BEST WAY TO WALK	11.15
	ERASERHEAD and THE CRAZIES	11.15
	ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE	
	ANYMORE and GIRLFRIENDS	2.15

Ticket prices: Adults, £1.20; Child 60p; OAP 60p

# COMING SOON...

The Mayefair kicks the month off with Nicholas Roeg's excellent *Bad Timing*. His best work since *Performance*, it bears all the trademarks of Roeg's direction: abrupt shifts in time and space, startling juxtaposition of scenes and disjointed plotting. The whole adds up to a disconcerting puzzle that compels attention far more effectively than any straightforward narrative.

Set in Vienna, the film draws heavily on the brooding solemnity of its location, the home of psychoanalysis. On a at the busy crossroads of East and West, the division of Europe has left Vienna a beleaguered outpost of the West. Its population has dwindled as the young move out, leaving a city of museums and memories to the old. The dying capital of a prosperous country.

Against this gloomy backdrop, a Viennese detective pieces together the history of an affair between two expatriate Americans. The detective, Netusil, is chillingly played by Harvey Keitel. Our understanding of

the volatile, obsessively sexual relationship proceeds at the pace of his investigation, but we are denied knowledge of the suspicions which guide Netusil.

While the interrogation continues, surgeons in a nearby hospital are struggling to keep the woman, Theresa Russell, alive. Horrifying close-ups of the tracheotomy they perform on her contrast violently with the innocence of Art Garfunkel's face as he submits patiently to questioning. The feeling that he is being persecuted, however, gives way uneasily to doubt as the film progresses seemingly unrelated sequences begin to fit into a time frame. The tense, unsettling mood continues throughout the film, the loose ends are not all tied, doubts persist even after the investigation is brought to a close, the implications continue to disturb.

The Rio's main programme opens with Monty Python's *Life Of Brian*, already reviewed in this column. This is followed by a double bill

of *Norma Rae* and *Breaking Away*, dealing with different aspects of working-class life in America. The former has Sally Field organising workers in a Southern textile mill, while in the latter class struggle takes the unlikely form of a hometown team cycle race.

## LATER

Later in the month, *Manhattan* is the latest and best in a string of Woody Allen's self-analytical, self-critical, self-conscious and extremely self-indulgent movies. Fortunately, it is funny enough to redeem the choice of insecure, middle-aged, middle-class New Yorkers as his subject matter yet again. *Manhattan* is double billed with *To Have And Have Not*. Another film worth watching out for is the highly acclaimed new release, *My Brilliant Career*. A first feature by a woman director, this is another encouraging sign of a thriving Australian state-aided industry.

# TAKING A RIDE

Centerprise's new book, *Taken For A Ride*, was published in the same week that a memo was leaked from London Transport showing that fares are going to have to go up by at least 40 per cent over the next year in order to break even. This makes the last section very appropriate where the author, Ruth Parsons, says that most bus workers could run the service better than London Transport does. "We could design better buses," she says, "not sardine boxes like the new ones. We would run services when people actually needed them."

Ruth is a conductor in a local garage and her story, written as an adult literacy reader, is very interesting and amusing. LT is



governed by a rule book which, as she says, means that if you stuck to them you'd never get any work done. For instance, the conductor is supposed to ring the bell for the bus to go off only when she or he is on the platform - and using the right hand only! It helps to be a born comedian, she says. "Everybody may think you're mad, but it doesn't matter, in fact it's a help"

Especially interesting is the section on racist comments that conductors have to put up with. White people, seeing her anti-racist badge, sometimes tell her that she only lets black people on. And black people also accuse her of forcing them to pay higher fares because they're black. You can't win!

*Taken For A Ride* is written by Ruth Parsons and illustrated by Christopher Madden. Available from Centerprise bookshop and some other shops in Hackney, 60p.

# WHATS ON

## Festivals

12th/13th July  
Shoreditch Festival.

19th/20th July  
Stoke Newington Common Festival.

12th July  
London Fields Festival.

12th July  
Woodberry Down Fete.

19th/20th July  
Hackney Marsh Fun Festival.

26th July  
Lea View Estate Summer Fair.

## Meetings

### HACKNEY HEALTH CAMPAIGN

JULY 8th: Hackney Health Campaign meeting. 7.30 at Shoreditch Health Centre, 210 Kingsland Road.

### HACKNEY COMMUNIST PARTY

Wed 16th: Public meeting. With Gordon McLennan, Gen. Sec. CP. Talk on Internationalism.

8.00pm at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St. All Welcome.

Sat 12th: Social. Dancing, Disco, etc. etc. Adm. 50p.

9pm 61 Kenninghall Rd. Sponsored by Hackney CP

### CAXTON HOUSE

St John's Way, N19

Sat 12th Disco in aid of Islington Gutter Press. With: 'The Straits', 'Charge', 'Pete Zero', Decibel Disco. 8.00 till 11.00 pm

### HACKNEY FIGHTBACK

Mon 7th: Public Meeting. 8.15pm Trades & Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane

## Theatre

### THEATRE ROYAL, STRATFORD

Gerry Raffles Sq, E19 534 0310

Until July 12th:

'A Short Sharp Shock' 8.00 pm Mon - Sat

### HALF MOON THEATRE

Until July 19th: "Tom Fool", an extraordinary treatment of the explosions that tear a family unit apart, revealing huge gaping areas of human brutality and pain. Half Moon Theatre, 27 Alie St., E1, 7.30pm Monday to Saturday.

### NEW HALF MOON

Until 30 July: "Pai Joey", at the New Half Moon, 213 Mile End Road, E1, 8 pm Mondays to Saturdays.



# Fightback

Hackney Fightback held a conference on the cuts at Clissold Park School on Saturday 28 June. Around 70 people attended, representing 14 organisations, but notable by their absence were the Council leadership. Cllr Kotz had agreed to attend, but backed out at the last minute. Word has it that he thought the conference may attack the Council's implementation of cuts, so was his non-attendance out of embarrassment or doesn't Cllr Kotz think Council actions worth defending? Cllr Kotz was also delegated by his Labour Party to attend the planning committee, but where was he?

In Cllr Kotz' absence the conference opened with a clearly embarrassed Cllr Sweeney trying to explain the Council's thinking behind massive cuts in housing and social services. Such cuts include money allocated for aids and adaptations for the disabled. In 79/80 it was £50,592, and for 1980/81 the allocation is £43,000. There is a five per cent cut in finance for nursery and under fives provision. In housing, 196 building workers have been made redun-

dant and the building programme severely curtailed. There has been a 15 per cent reduction in general hospital services, which in the end means that people have to wait longer for a hospital bed, and are discharged before they are fully recovered.

Conference workshops in the morning included housing, social services, education, health and local government finance, and proposals for action were discussed. These came together (after much infighting which some of us lesser mortals may have been confused by) into eight specific proposals for building a Hackney Fightback Campaign.

These proposals are:

1. That Fightback continue as a campaign, open to delegates from organisations and all activists committed to building the campaign.
2. All working class and community organisations to elect delegates to the Fightback steering committee.

3. A Newsletter is produced to act as a focus for the local cuts campaigns.
4. Fightback develops a plan for services to meet the actual needs of the people of the borough.
5. A Week of Action against cuts be organised for the autumn.
6. Lobbying of councillors and other action is organised over the 'topping up' of the Rate Support Grant in the autumn.
7. Fightback links up with other local campaigns, especially on a London-wide basis, to develop mass action against the cuts.
8. Another conference be organised for the beginning of next year.

These recommendations were passed at the end of the Conference.

The next Fightback meeting will be held on Monday 7th July at the Trades and Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane, at 8.00 pm.

COLLECT  
WASTE  
PAPER!

This paper is 100% recycled

On June 25th Hackney Friends of the Earth began a waste paper collection in Woodberry Down, N4. This will be a regular event, and hopefully will cover all the two thousand dwellings on the estate.

Response has been encouraging and we aim to reach the one ton mark when we collect again, which will be on:

Wednesday, August 6th.

Why not start one in your area?

Contact: Friends of the Earth c/o Sun Power, 83 Blackstock Road, N4. (phone 226 1799.)

## SMALL ADS

ADVERTISE IN YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER!  
If you are thinking of selling your bike, stereo, pet fish or indoor swimming pool HPP could work for you! For a meagre 3p a word the columns are yours. Ads must be pre-paid. Cheques or postal orders to Hackney People's Press, 85 Dalston Lane, E8.

Ads for the August issue must be received by Friday 25 July.

**SUN POWER**  
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## Report admits crisis

A Report to the Housing Development Committee on 13th May brought home to Hackney's councillors the devastating effect on the borough's Housing Programme of Government cuts in public spending.

Although the kind of information contained in the report from the Director of Housing, Tony Shoults, should have come as no surprise, the predicted extent and seriousness of the housing shortage may have come as a shock.

Last month's report was an extended revision of a previous paper, also called 'Lettings - Supply and Demand 1980', which was presented to

the Housing Management Committee on 3rd March. As its title suggests, the report is a fairly straightforward assessment of likely future demand and likely supply both in the short-term and over the next 5 years.

The report says that supply has been steadily decreasing over the past four years and concludes that "it is possible that no applicants would be housed in points turn by the Borough in 1980/81". This means that nobody would be housed from the waiting list and only such groups as the priority homeless would be housed. The predicted total

unsatisfied demand for council housing is 15,650 applicants.

The report goes on to say that "from 1983 onwards the supply is likely to be only 500 units or less per annum, and of this perhaps as many as 400 units will come from conversion, improvement, or replacement of existing properties, which will first have to be decanted". (Decanting means moving people from one home to another to allow works to be carried out.) So, in real terms, the actual addition to stock will be tiny.

The most positive way of

increasing supply - by buying houses, particularly those at present under-occupied or semi-derelict - is, as the report states, strictly limited by the Government.

Searching around for further ways of resolving this impossible situation, it is suggested that recourse be made to increasing densities on new estates and rehabilitation schemes, or to persuading those living in houses or flats larger than they need to move out.

Mr. Shoults openly admits to the extreme seriousness of the housing shortage, but it is the obvious inadequacy of these proposed 'solutions' which really drives home his point.

6' x 9' film screen and home-science course to sell or swap. Printing machine wanted. 806 2031.

AN EAST END DIRECTORY: a guide to the East End of London. 140 pages, maps and photos; packed with information on organisations, sources of information, points of interest, etc. Emphasis on Tower Hamlets. From the publisher: Peter Marcan, 31 Rowliiff Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. £3.50, plus 50 pence postage/packing.

FOR SALE. Cheap flash umbrella for photography. Phone Chris 254 1306.

FREE if you can collect. Gas fridge. Contact Trojan Printing, 85 Dalston Lane, E8. 11am - 7pm daily.

## ..... Guide To Events In Hackney

HOXTON HALL THEATRE  
128a Hoxton St, N1  
Box Office: 739 5431

Sat 5th: 'A La Carte'  
One-person show based on the works of Gilbert & Sullivan, by Gordon Honey. 8.00pm. FREE.

Sat 12th & Sun 13th:  
During the weekend: watch out for the Surprise St Theatre & the Fat Cat playstall at the Shoreditch Festival.

Fri 11th: 'ff klein luftpause'  
Jail Warehouse present their multi-media event embracing the world of the Opera Experience that has already played several places in London. 8.00 pm

Fri 18th: Stuart Deeks (violin) John Nash (guitar) & Nancy Ruffer (flute) present their own mixed bag of music. 8.00 pm  
Tickets (unless otherwise stated): Adult £1, Child 30p, Pensioners & Claimants 20p, members 50p.

CENTERPRISE  
136 Kingsland High St, E8  
254 9632

Wed 9th: Beryl & the Perils  
6.00 pm onwards. FREE

Thurs 10th: Hackney Travellers Meeting. 8.15 Public.

Fri 15th: Hackney Under 5's 8.00 - 10.00

Tues. 15th: YCL Meeting 7.30 pm

Sat 5th: Open Day & Fete  
In the grounds of the Hostel for the Mentally Handicapped, 11 Salcombe Rd, Stoke Newington. 2.00 pm - 5.30 pm  
Many stalls and food & drink

### INTER-ACTION SUMMER TRAINING PROGRAMME

Inter-Action is running a series of workshops "designed to teach skills usable with a groupwork situation".

Workshops are as follows:

(For July)

Music - its use in play.  
Materials - using them to express oral history.  
Media - basic skills for use with young people and adults

This week aims to help people to put their ideas into practice and to go on improving them.

## COURSES:

Workshops will include:  
Generating Creative Ideas.  
Building a team.  
Promotion and marketing.  
Raising money  
Administering small projects  
Budgeting and financial control  
Monitoring and evaluation

Fees for the workshops will be £10 per day payable in advance.  
Enquiries to: Mike Jenn, Inter-Action, 15 Wilkin St, NW5. 485 0881; 267 9421.

### MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY GROUP

July 23rd: 'The Use and Abuse of Models in Health Education'. Informal discussion introduced by Alan Beattie from the Institute of Education.

6.00pm Room S421, St. Clements Building, LSE, Houghton St, WC2. Details: phone Barbara Harrison, 928 8989, extension X2380.



# 'SAVE THE MARSHES' CALL AGAIN

It is nearly a year since the Hackney Gazette carried a front page headline saying, "Fight Is On To Save Wildlife Marshes". A packed, emotional meeting at Chats Palace had decided to oppose the application by the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority to extract gravel from Walthamstow Marshes on the borders of Hackney and Waltham Forest.

Many months of hectic campaigning followed, attracting national press coverage and scientific interest from all over the country. The local councils on both sides of the Lea agreed that the Marshes should not be destroyed. 1500 people signed a petition to the GLC and over 100 people wrote letters to their planning department.

Finally, in February the GLC Minerals Sub-Committee refused planning permission and this seemed to be one of the greatest successes achieved by a local pressure group for a long time.

The Campaign began to work on a management programme for the Marshes, and were shocked and amazed when the members of the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority decided to appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Heseltine. Although they are a statutory body of elected members, they seem unaware

of public opinion.

An expensive public enquiry is bound to follow involving the Campaign raising at least £3,000 for legal expenses.

But what is so special about Walthamstow Marshes?

The Marshes represent 80 acres of true marshland, one of the last such areas in the whole of the Lea Valley, a remnant of the old water-meadow system. There are other areas called 'Marsh' nearby, but they are no longer true marsh - for example they have been filled in with blitz rubble like Hackney Marshes and made into playing fields.

## SAXONS

Walthamstow, on the contrary, has never been dumped on or built on and would still be recognizable to the Saxons. For centuries the Marshes were Lammas land with grazing and haymaking rights. In 1934 these rights were given up by the commoners in exchange for the Marshes becoming public open space. Nearly 50 years later the Marshes are still public open space, although in the ownership of the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA).

Some people say the Marshes need tidying up, yet to anyone who knows them well it is the aspect of wilderness that gives them their special appeal. The Marshes are a piece of real countryside in a built-up area, where many households are without gardens and many children, surrounded by concrete, do not know the difference between a dandelion and a daisy.



The Marshes provide a respite from the pressure of urban life. They are used by dog-walkers, bird watchers and botanists, by horse riders and schools. There are over 340 species of plants on the marshes, including several hybrids. Such variety indicates an ancient habitat, proving that the ground has lain undisturbed for many years. The flourishing plant life provides food and shelter for many different kinds of bird and butterfly.



When the LVRPA was set up in 1966 part of their brief was to "improve and restore" and even to set up nature reserves. The Save the Marshes Campaign believes that the Marshes have a tremendous potential for education and could be managed as an educational nature reserve without restricting public access.

So far the LVRPA has ignored every word and seems hell-bent on destroying the Marshes. Once they are gone they can never be restored. Yet the LVRPA have never consulted Hackney people on the subject.

The Campaign desperately needs your help. Come to our next committee meeting if you can. They are held at All Souls Church, Overbury St, E5 at 8pm on alternate Mondays. If you would like more information about the Campaign, contact Jane Nash, 93 Mayola Rd, E5 (tel. 986 1785). We will need a lot of money to fight the appeal. If you can make a donation to the fighting fund, please send it to the Secretary of the Save the Marshes Campaign at the above address.

A booklet about flora and fauna on the Marshes is also available, price 50p, from the Secretary.

## Theory + Practice at BOC

Twenty-eight jobs are threatened at the acetylene department of British Oxygen's Hackney depot - nearly half the workforce. Plants at Crewe and Newport are to be closed.

Recently the company announced their intention of reducing their labour force by a further 10 per cent - 300 redundancies.

John Walsh, senior steward at the Hackney depot said: "What lies behind all these redundancies is an attempt by BOC to apply Mrs Thatcher's philosophy in practice. They want to sort out the unions - using mass unemployment."

## ANSWER

"Their excuse for the closures is the economic crisis and the reduced requirements they allege are needed. Well, we don't accept this argument. Our answer to them is that we will not accept any form of compulsory redundancy."

BOC workers have a marvellous tradition of solidarity with other sections

of workers. The Hackney depot in the last 15 months has seen two one-day strikes in support of a local campaign against the cuts and in line with the TUC's 14th May day of action.

Send solidarity messages to: John Walsh, TGMU Convenor, BOC Hackney, Eastway, E8.

Socialist Worker

## Oxo Out

One hundred members of the shopworkers' union, USDAW, are out on strike at Leibig Meats in Hackney. The firm, owned by Brooke Bond Oxo, made an interim increase in wages of 7.3 per cent to their five other subsidiaries last January, but refused to give Leibig workers the same deal.

## FIGHTING

Although strikers have been disappointed with some of their colleagues returning to work, they are determined to carry on fighting for better conditions.

## HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS holds regular meetings on Mondays at 8pm in our office at 85 Dalston Lane, E8. If you would like to find out more about us - or volunteer to help write, produce or sell the next issue - then please come along. Meetings during July will be on 7th, 14th and 21st July. If you can't come, then please ring 249 0311, evenings and weekends only.

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## PETTY BUREAU

